



CHANNEL CLASSICS

Toyohiko Sato 3

The Art of Spanish Variations

'Conde Claros' and other
Spanish Vihuela Music



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At the end of the fifteenth century a truly national musical style grew up in Spain, especially in the music written during the reign of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. They were married in 1469 and with that a new age of prosperity and stability started. The arts flourished.

After the last Saracens were expelled from Granada in 1492 (the same year of the discovery of the New World by Columbus) Spain became one big catholic empire.

The common type of lute, called “laud” and brought into Spain by the Saracens in the eighth century, was now considered as a pagan instrument and forced into the background in favour of a new instrument: the *vihuela*. The vihuela was developed from the Italian *viola da mano*, a very popular guitar shaped lute, existing in the late fifteenth century in Italy. There were two types of viola’s, one was played with a bow and the other with a plectrum. The latter was called viola “da mano”.

The “vihuela da mano”, as Luis Milán called it, had a sound that differs from the lute, due to its flat back and gourd-shaped soundboard. The standard vihuela was a six-course instrument, however five-, seven-, eight- and ten-course instruments were used as well. The vihuela had ten tied frets and twelve frets at the neck and body joint. Traditional wood used for the soundboard was spruce or cedar. Mosaic inlays in the soundboards stem from a Middle Eastern tradition that can still be seen today in the mosaic inlays of the Middle Eastern and North African *oud*, the forerunner of the European lute. From 1530 till 1560 the vihuela enjoyed its golden age. The repertoire contains a wealth of important new music.

Spanish vihuela players developed a particular form of music, called *diferencias* or variations. Variations were made in very different ways, sometimes changing from one to another technique from variation to variation. Sometimes the original melody was kept more or less intact, either in the top voice or in one of the lower voices and the counterpoints or chords around this melody were changed. The melody itself could be ornamented with figuration patterns. Sometimes the melody even disappeared and only

The theme is often more suggested by implication through its harmonic outline than by melodic variation. On an equally famous theme *Guárdame las Vacas*, the romance in which “vacas” (cows) stand for the women of the King, Narváez wrote seven variations, each a short character piece. Romances, characteristic secular songs from the age of Ferdinand and Isabella, were long narrative poems of many strophes. Settings of romances usually consisted of four phrases of music, presumably intended to be repeated over and over. These phrases functioned well as starting places for elaborate variation. The *Canción del Emperador* is based on the chanson *Mille regretz* by Josquin des Prez. Narváez set the song in tablature and made use of some diminutions.

The third published tablature is **Tres libros de música en cifras para Vihuela**. (Seville, 1546) by Alonso Mudarra (before 1520 – 1580, Seville). Like most of the other tablatures Mudarra’s includes *diferencias on a ground* as well as settings of romances for vihuela. The grounds, or *bassi ostinati*, and romance tunes belonged to popular tradition and most sixteenth century Spanish composers employed fragments of them in their works. Mudarra’s book includes four sets of *Guárdame las vacas*. The variation set performed here is written in a *Romanesca* (dance) style and has four variations. Also from the first book are the twelve variations on *Conde Claros* and the *Fantasia, que contrahaze la harpa en la manera de Ludovico*. This “harp-like” piece intends to imitate the style of the famous contemporary harpist Ludovico.

The **Libro de música de Vihuela intítulado Silva de sirenas** by **Enriques de Valderrábano** (16th c.) was published in Valladolid in 1547. It contains pages of motets and chansons by other contemporary Flemish, French, Italian and Spanish composers, arranged either for one vihuela or for two. The duets are printed in such a way that two performers can read from the same book while sitting opposite each other. The duet *Conde Claros* is played by two vihuela’s tuned in a difference of a minor third. The theme is heard in the higher part. The duet *Discantar sobre un punto* is a “treble on a ground”. The “ground” consists of only one chord, while the treble part is melodic and elaborately written. The “dissonant-chords” resemble the Arabian Ud-music. In addition Valderrábano included among others 48 variations on *Conde Claros* and variations on *Guárdame las vacas*, here again seven variations. The theme is heard in the second and

fourth variation. *Soneto lombardo a manera de dança* is a dance tune with a clear rhythmic influence of Northern Italian music.

Diego Pisador (ca. 1509 – ca. 1560) published: **Libro de música de Vihuela** in Salamanca, 1552. The villanesca *La Cortesiá* is a small piece based on a popular part-song of the time. *Conde Claros con sierta diferencias* is a set with 38 variations, using daring harmonic and melodic lines not related to any other European music.

The blind organist **Antonio de Cabezón** (ca. 1500 – 1566), often called the “Spanish Bach”, was a great keyboard composer. He was during the 1540’s and 1550’s a member of the Spanish Chapel in the service of Philip II. Cabezón published **Obras de música para Tecla, Arpa y Vihuela** (Madrid, 1578). The book was written in Spanish keyboard–tablature. The romance *Para quien crie yo cabellos* had to be transcribed into vihuela (Italian lute–) tablature. The piece, based on a song, is written in two parts. In the first part diminutions are made in the top line, in the second part in the bass–line. The piece finishes after the first part is repeated.

Around 1580 the vihuela vanishes and the bloom of the art of Spanish variations comes to an end. But, quoting Toyohiko Satoh: “The vihuela and its music remain to us a vision of wonder, because of its very particular style of music.”

Rineke Šmilde

Instrument:

Seven - course vihuela, copying 16th century models, built by Bert Kwakkel in 1989, Dieren, Holland.

Toyohiko Satoh

Toyohiko Satoh was born in 1943 in Japan. After his music study (guitar, cello and composition) in Japan, he came to Europe in 1968 to study lute with Eugen Dombois at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel, Switzerland.

Since 1970, when Satoh made the world's first Baroque lute solo album, he had recorded extensively for different labels. Two of them won prizes. His ensemble recordings with such noted musicians as Frans Brüggen, Gustav Leonhardt, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Elly Ameling also brought consistent honours and awards. Satoh performed in many festivals such as the Vienna Musikwochen, Holland Festival, Toronto Festival, Lisbon Festival, etc. He is touring all over the world.



Since 1973 Toyohiko Satoh is lute professor at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Holland. He gives frequent masterclasses in various countries including the USA, Canada and Japan and performs medieval, renaissance and early baroque music as well as contemporary music, including his own compositions. Satoh leads the ensemble ALBA MUSICA KYO and he is also a member of LITTLE CONSORT AMSTERDAM. A part of his compositions and a 'Method for the Baroque Lute' are published by Tree-Edition in Munich, Germany.

DDD

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Toyohiko Satoh - Vihuela

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Alonso Mudarra (before 1520 - 1580) from: *Tres libros de música en cifras para Vihuela* (...) Sevilla 1546

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | Diferencias sobre el CONDE CLAROS | 3.09 |
| 2 | Fantasia que contrahaze la harpa en la manera de Ludovico | 2.12 |
| 3 | Romanesca; GUARDAME LAS VACAS | 1.50 |

Antonio de Cabezón (ca. 1500 - 1566) from: *Obras de música para Tecla, Arpa y Vihuela* (...) Madrid 1578

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------|
| 4 | Romance: Para quien críe yo cabellos | 3.29 |
|---|--------------------------------------|------|

Enríques de Valderrábano, (16th C.) from: *Libro de música de Vihuela intitulado 'Silva de sirenas'* (...) Valladolid 1547

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|---|--|-------|
| 5 | CONDE CLAROS (para dos Vihuelas) | 2.26 |
| 6 | Discantar sobre un punto (para dos Vihuelas) | 3.24 |
| 7 | Siete diferencias sobre GUARDAME LAS VACAS | 3.25 |
| 8 | Soneto lombardo a manera de dança | 1.50 |
| 9 | Diferencias sobre CONDE CLAROS | 10.04 |

Luis Milán (ca. 1500 - ca. 1565) from: *Libro de música de Vihuela de mano* (...) Valencia 1536

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|----|--------------------------|------|
| 10 | Fantasia del octavo tono | 3.46 |
| 11 | Fantasia del quarto tono | 2.24 |

Luis de Narváez (ca. 1500 - ca. 1555) from: *Los seys libros del Delphin de música en cifras para Vihuela* (...) Valladolid 1538

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|----|--|------|
| 12 | CONDE CLAROS con diferencias | 4.51 |
| 13 | Diferencias sobre GUARDAME LAS VACAS | 3.03 |
| 14 | Canción del Emperador; sobre 'Mille Regretz' de Josquin des Prez | 2.49 |

Diego Pisador (ca. 1509 - ca. 1560) from: *Libro de música de Vihuela* (...) Salamanca 1552

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|------|
| 15 | Villanesca: La Cortesía | 2.16 |
| 16 | CONDE CLAROS con cierta diferencias | 7.50 |

Total time 60.11

Second Vihuela played by Ireen Thomas

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